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Minority Business Owners Have Opportunity to Gain New Skills, Industry Knowledge During Minority Enterprise Development Week

City partners on week-long series of events designed to help minority entrepreneurs and business owners grow and improve their businesses

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Thursday, Oct. 13) - Local minority entrepreneurs and business owners will have the opportunity to join a week-long series of networking and skill-building events in honor of Minority Enterprise Development Week, observed locally on Oct. 17 - 24.

The City of Chattanooga joined nine other local and regional partners to organize the 10-event lineup in celebration of the achievements and contributions of the region's minority-owned business community. The events are free, open to the public, and geared toward minority business owners, community leaders, and individuals who are interested in starting or growing a business. Interested individuals can register online to participate at <https://econ.chattanooga.gov/med-week-oct-17-24/>.

"Minority-owned businesses create living-wage jobs, generate tax revenue for our schools and infrastructure, and brighten and strengthen the fabric of our culture, yet they continue to face long-standing barriers to starting and growing their enterprises," said Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly. "That's why we are proud to partner with the community to offer skill-building classes and technical assistance during this year's Minority Enterprise Development Week."

"From funding fundamentals to marketing your business for government contracting, these events will help our minority business owners and entrepreneurs gain the knowledge and tools they need to thrive and prosper," continued Kelly.

MED WEEK 2022
Middle & East Tennessee

OCTOBER

Mon 17	Tue 18	Wed 19	Thu 20	Fri 21	Mon 24
11:30 am-1:30 pm EST Marketing Your Business for Government Contracting	12 pm - 1:00pm CST Grow with Google (organic reach, advertising, google Business profile)	9:00-10:00 am EST Making Sense of Your Small Business Financials 11-12:00 EST Funding Fundamentals 12-1:30 pm EST In-Person Find Your Funding (Panel + Networking) 12:00 -2:00 pm CST Estimating & Bidding 2:00 - 3:30 pm EST Capability Statements and Elevator Pitches (virtual) 4:00-5:00 pm EST Who Is Your Customer?	10:00 - 11:00 am EST Supplier Diversity: Why Does it Matter?	 Support your local Minority owned Businesses Day!! Knoxville Black Owned Business Directory	 Hosted by: The City of Chattanooga's Department of Equity and Community Engagement 6pm-8:30pm EST In-Person Bessie Smith Hall

The City of Chattanooga thanks all of the partners involved in organizing the week's events, including:

- City of Knoxville Small Business & Diversity Outreach Office
- EPB
- First Horizon Bank
- Knoxville Area Urban League
- Nashville Business Incubation Center
- Pathway Lending
- Regions Bank
- Tennessee Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- Urban League of Middle Tennessee

Ongoing Support of Minority-owned Businesses

Since taking office, Mayor Tim Kelly has directed city officials to streamline processes and procedures to make it easier for minority-owned businesses to do business with the city. As a part of this overhaul, Chief Procurement Officer Kevin Bartenfield modernized the city's vendor portal and transitioned to processing vendor invoices and payments through a single electronic system, significantly reducing the amount of time it takes vendors to get paid.

Additionally, in July, Chattanooga City Council approved an increase in the city's small purchase threshold from \$5,000 to \$20,000, which allows departments to make purchases of up to \$20,000 with one formal quote as opposed to three - making it significantly easier for small, local, and minority-owned companies to perform services for the city.

The City's Department of Equity and Community Engagement is also helping empower local minority businesses by hosting [monthly roundtables](#) as part of its commitment to increasing supplier diversity. The roundtables are designed to create a community for small black and brown business owners and entrepreneurs to network and get connected to resources according to their unique needs.

Looking ahead, Mayor Tim Kelly's [One Chattanooga Relief and Recovery Plan](#) dedicates \$8.8 million in federal funding for initiatives that will support workforce development and entrepreneurship for the city's minority communities, including creation of a new, \$1.4 million minority business resource center.

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